

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject patent application are respectfully requested.

Applicant's representative wishes to thank Examiners Menberu and Williams for the courtesy extended during the personal interview on January 10, 2006. The substance of this interview is incorporated in the remarks herein.

Claim 21 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 101 because the recording medium recited therein is not described as a "computer-readable" recording medium. While not agreeing that the absence of "computer-readable" in the claim language constitutes a proper basis for a Section 101 rejection, Applicant has nonetheless amended claim 21 to specify a "computer-readable" recording medium. This amendment is not believed to raise any new issues and thus entry of the amendment is believed to be appropriate and is respectfully requested. Based on this amendment, withdrawal of the Section 101 rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 21, 25-27 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being "obvious" over Hisatomi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,661,933) in view of Takahashi et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,424,429).

As discussed at the interview, the subject patent application describes, by way of example without limitation, a document management system in which portions of a received image are extracted and used in the retrieval of documents stored in a memory. In an illustrative example embodiment, a document ID and summary information (e.g., a reduced or condensed image) are extracted from a received image of a document request form. As explained in the specification:

...it is arranged that output of the document be suspended when the thumbnail information extracted from the received image is not correct, and further, that the thumbnail information is a condensed image of the document makes it almost impossible for a person having no knowledge of the contents thereof to forge it, thus suppressing occurrence of such a problem that the document request form 21 is forged so as to illegally obtain a document from the document management device 1. Page 29, lines 14-22.

As further discussed at the interview, Applicants respectfully submit that Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. would not have made the rejected claims obvious.

Hisatomi et al. discloses a “process of fetching out an image data.” See, e.g., col. 9, lines 56-57. In this process, a document ID is obtained from a marked sheet. The document ID is supplied to a document image managing means 103, which finds a storage location corresponding to the document ID and then reads out a corresponding image file from the storage location. Hisatomi et al. however does not disclose or suggest, among other things, the concept of “summary information” specified in independent claims 1, 21, 23, 24 and 25 and thus does not disclose or suggest the feature of these claims in which a document is output based on both an identification number and summary information extracted from a received image.

The office action acknowledges the deficiency of Hisatomi et al. in this regard and relies on Takahashi et al. to purportedly remedy this deficiency. Takahashi et al. discloses a system in which backups of copied documents are saved and can be accessed at a later time. As discussed at the interview, Takahashi et al. describes appended data, which can include keywords, associated with the stored documents. When documents are stored in the IMS, appended data can be extracted from an input image using OCR, and is used to cross-reference the stored documents. See, e.g., Takahashi et al., col. 22, lines 1-18.

Takahashi et al. fails to disclose or suggest extracting, from an image, information used in retrieving stored documents. In particular, Takahashi et al. fails to disclose extracting, from an image, summary information used in judging or determining whether to output a document. In Takahashi et al., appended data is extracted from an image by OCR only during the inputting of documents to the system. Regarding the output of documents, Takahashi et al. describes only that output is achieved by displaying thumbnails and the user judging which documents (corresponding to the thumbnails) should be outputted. See, e.g., Takahashi et al., col. 15, line 58 to col. 17, line 27 and col. 21, lines 31-48.

Takahashi et al. suggests that keywords can be used to retrieve documents. See, e.g., Takahashi et al., col. 23, lines 44-53. However, such retrieval is via the server, which does not extract information from images. See, e.g., Takahashi et al., col. 20, line 61 to col. 21, line 14 and Figure 6. Using keywords in Takahashi et al. still apparently results in thumbnails being presented for final user selection. In any event, Takahashi et al.'s use of keywords does not correspond to extracting summary information from an image, as recited in the independent

claims. The keywords of Takahashi et al. are nowhere disclosed as being used for judging as set forth in independent claims 1, 21, 23, 24 and 25.

For at least these reasons, the proposed combination of Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. would not have resulted in receiving an image, extracting an identification number and summary information from the received image, and outputting a document based on the extracted identification number and summary information as specified in independent claims 1, 21, 23, 24 and 25 and the claims that depend therefrom.

Moreover, the motivation for the proposed combination alleged in the office action is to make data retrieval "quicker." However, it appears that retrieval would actually be slower and more difficult in any device or system resulting from the combination of Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. Specifically, Hisatomi et al. retrieves a document on the basis of an ID. The use of Takahashi's keywords for retrieval would seem to complicate the retrieval in Hisatomi et al. both from the user's perspective (keywords need be selected) and from a processing perspective (additional processing would be required for the keywords). Consequently, Applicants do not believe that the Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. would have been combined as stated in the office action.

The dependent claims include features that provide additional and independent bases for patentability.

By way of example, with respect to claim 3, neither Hisatomi et al. nor Takahashi et al. discloses that the summary information comprises a partial image. In this regard, the office action references col. 36, lines 56-67 of Takahashi et al. However, the "image data" mentioned in this portion of Takahashi et al. refers to the data read from a document for copying. Thus, this image data does not correspond to, or suggest, summary information that comprises a partial document as claimed. Similarly, neither Hisatomi et al. nor Takahashi et al. discloses or suggests the image or condensed image specified in claims 26 and 27.

By way of further example, claim 32 calls for the image received by the input section to comprise an image document request form on which an identification number and summary information are printed. Nothing in either Hisatomi et al. or Takahashi et al. discloses a request form having summary information as claimed. For this additional and independent reason, claim 32 is believed to be allowable.

Claims 5-12 and 28-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being "obvious" over the proposed Hisatomi et al.-Takahashi et al. combination, in further view of Jeran et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,628,412). Jeran et al. is cited for its disclosure of printing information such as a version number or a code for authorization on a document. When the document is later scanned, the information can be used to track the document or to determine whether a particular person has permission to copy the document. These teachings are in a different context than the subject matter of claims 5-12 and 28-31. In Jeran et al., the information is associated with a document in a person's possession and is used to track the document or to determine whether that document can be copied. In the context of claim 8, for example, the presence/absence of approval information is used to determine whether to output a document. Accordingly, in addition to failing to remedy the deficiencies of Hisatami et al. and Takahashi et al. in connection with the claims from which claims 5-12 and 28-31 depend, Jeran et al. fails to render obvious the subject matter of these claims.

Claims 23 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as allegedly being "obvious" over the proposed Hisatomi et al.-Takahashi et al. combination, in further view of Fukushima et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,293,256) and Dieterman et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,560,704). The document management system of claims 23 and 24 each includes a document management device along the lines of claim 1 and thus the Hisatomi et al.-Takahashi et al. combination is lacking with respect to this subject matter for the reasons set forth above. Fukushima et al. and Dieterman et al. at least fail to remedy the deficiencies of Hisatomi et al. and Takahashi et al. in this regard and claims 23 and 24 are believed to be allowable for at least this reason.

NAGATA
Appl. No. 09/729,426
Response to Office Action dated November 2, 2005

The pending claims are believed to be allowable and favorable office action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

By:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Michael J. Shea", written over a horizontal line.

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